

CLAIMS:

1. A method to set up a security association (SA) between a first node and a second node in a packet switched environment, comprising the steps of forwarding a prefix value in a message from the first node to the second node, and creating a security association between the first node and the second node using the prefix value.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the packet switched environment is a IP Multimedia Subsystem (IMS) of a 3rd generation (3G) network
3. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the first node is User Equipment (UE).
4. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the second node is a Proxy Call State Control Function (P-CSCF)
5. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the message is a protocol message
6. A method as claimed in claim 5, wherein the protocol is a Session Initiation Protocol (SIP)
7. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the message is a SIP REGISTER message.
8. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the prefix value is included in a header of the message.

9. A method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the header is the Security-Client header
10. A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the prefix value is included in an extension parameter of the Security-Client header
11. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the prefix value has a first value if there is only one IP address or a second value if there is a plurality of IP addresses.
12. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the prefix value is allocated by a Gateway GPRS Support Node (GGSN)
13. A system comprising a first node and a second node in a packet switched environment, wherein the first node is arranged to forward its prefix value in a message to the second node, and wherein the second node is arranged to create a security association with the first node using the prefix value.
14. A system as claimed in claim 13, wherein the packet switched environment is a IP Multimedia Subsystem of a 3rd generation network.
15. A system as claimed in claim 13, wherein the first node is User Equipment (UE).
16. A system as claimed in claim 13, wherein the second node is a Proxy Call State Control Function (P-CSCF).
17. A system as claimed in claim 13, wherein the message is a protocol message.
18. A system as claimed in claim 17, wherein the protocol is SIP.

19. A system as claimed in claim 13, wherein the message is a REGISTER message.

20. A system as claimed in claim 13, wherein the prefix value is included in a header of the message.

21. A system as claimed in claim 20, wherein the header is a Security-Client header.

22. A system as claimed in claim 21, wherein the prefix value is included in an extension parameter of the Security-Client header.

23. A system as claimed in claim 13, wherein the prefix value has a first value if the SA has one IP address only and a second value if the SA has a range of IP addresses.

24. A system as claimed in claim 13, wherein the prefix value is allocated to the UE by a Gateway GPRS Support Node (GGSN).

25. A system comprising a first node and a second node, said first and second node arranged to have a security association associated therewith, said security association being usable with a plurality of IP addresses.